

# News Release

**March 9, 2005**

For Immediate Release

**Contact**

Becky Sapper, 715 682-5789, [rsapper@tnc.org](mailto:rsapper@tnc.org)  
The Nature Conservancy in Wisconsin

## **Wisconsin Battles Invasive Species**

### *Governor Doyle appoints Council on Invasive Species*

MADISON, Wisconsin — Wisconsin is presently battling a number of invasive species, including gypsy moth, zebra mussels, Eurasian watermilfoil, purple loosestrife, and garlic mustard. There are also many new invasive species that could arrive and damage our forests, lakes and rivers, including the emerald ash borer.

Thousands of plants and animals have been brought to North America in the past three centuries for use as food and medicine, and for ornamental, sentimental, or other reasons. But they don't always stay where we put them. Other species arrive in Wisconsin unintentionally. No matter how they get here, once they do, they have no natural controls to keep their numbers in check. They are able to out-compete their native counterparts here, causing native species to decline or disappear.

Unfortunately, the cost of invasive species does not stop with the damage done to plants and animals. In fact, the cost to the national economy has been estimated as high as \$137 billion per year and increasing, due primarily to losses in agriculture, forestry and fisheries, as well as to the cost of clearing invasive-clogged waterways and fighting invasive-fueled fires.

Acknowledging these facts, the Wisconsin State Legislature demonstrated a firm commitment to address the issue of invasive species in Wisconsin by creating the Wisconsin Council on Invasive Species, to which Governor Jim Doyle appointed 13 members. The Council was created to address the issues of invasive species that harm Wisconsin's ecological and economic resources, as well as human health.

"We are privileged to enjoy Wisconsin's many high-quality forests, waterways, wetlands, and agricultural areas," Governor Doyle said. "They are essential to the quality of life we've come to expect here in our great state. It is important that we acknowledge the growing threat from invasive species to our natural resources and work to find solutions."

As part of the Council's efforts, monthly news releases will be issued throughout 2005, which has been proclaimed the Year of Land and Water Conservation by Governor Doyle. The news releases will raise awareness of specific problematic species and offer suggestions on how citizens and visitors can help abate this threat to our environment and economy.

Governor Doyle has also proclaimed June 2005 as Invasive Species Awareness Month. During June, numerous field trips, workshops, presentations and work parties will be held throughout the state. A statewide alliance of non-profit conservation groups, land trusts, Native Americans, educational institutions, botanical gardens, nature centers, forest industry groups, green industry groups, and county, state and federal agencies, will work together to share the message with Wisconsin citizens that "Invasive species are an important issue to confront!" A website is currently under development within the [Wisconsin.gov](http://Wisconsin.gov) web domain to provide details on these statewide activities, as well as on other invasive species resources : [www.invasivespecies.wi.gov/awareness](http://www.invasivespecies.wi.gov/awareness).

MORE

The most effective way to protect natural areas from invading species is prevention. Understanding what invasive species are and how they affect the environment is important for us all. There are things that each of us can do to help prevent these invaders from spreading. When buying plants for your garden or land, avoid plants that are invasive (see the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources Web site: [www.dnr.state.wi.us/org/caer/ce/invasives/](http://www.dnr.state.wi.us/org/caer/ce/invasives/)). Contact your local nursery, agricultural extension agent, master gardener, or native plant society for more information. Be especially watchful for invasive species if you live near a natural area. Do not forget that, besides your boots, the wind, animals, streams or even rainwater drainage systems can carry weed seeds far from your home, into wild habitats!

*This news release is sponsored by the Wisconsin Council on Invasive Species. The Wisconsin State Legislature created the Council, to which Governor Doyle appointed 13 members, to address the issues of invasive species that harm Wisconsin's ecological and economic resources, as well as human health. Funding for this news release was provided, in part, by a grant from the Wisconsin Coastal Management Program.*